

King George V - 'Seahorse' High Values Issue.

After the death of King Edward VII on 6th May 1910, the priority for the Post Office would have been to produce a new series of low value, definitive sized, postage stamps for the new King. This resulted in the ½d and 1d stamps using the ¾ profile 'Downey Head', issued on Coronation day, 22nd June 1911. Although the design for the definitive stamps was not a success, it was not replaced until October 1912 (for the 1d), and January 1913 (for the ½d). Soon after that, the new high values followed with the issue of a set of four line-engraved stamps we've come to know of as '**Seahorses**'.

The Designer



Regal Coinage



Coronation Medal

· *Edgar Bertram Mackennal* (1863-1931).

Edgar Bertram Mackennal was born in 1863 in Fitzroy, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, the son of Annabella and John Simpson Mackennal, a sculptor. His artistic talents were encouraged early on by his father, followed by four years at the School of Design at the Melbourne National Gallery. He left for London in 1882, then on to Paris in 1884, before returning to England in 1886 where he was appointed head of modelling and design at the Coalport Potteries. In 1887 he returned to Melbourne to fulfil a commission for the sculptured reliefs on the front of Parliament House. From here on his life centred around Melbourne, Paris and London.

In 1908 he designed the medals for the hastily arranged Olympic Games in London, in 1911 the Coronation medal for King George V, as well as the new coinage required for the new monarch. Bertram Mackennal was brought into the 'stamp design' process for the King George V definitive stamp issue at the suggestion of the King himself, and naturally progressed to the high values.



The illustration of Bertram Mackennal's essay is courtesy of The Royal Collection.

Bertram Mackennal was Knighted in 1921 by H.M. King George V

Issued date - July 1913 - Type 'A'.

The set comprises four 'high value' denominations, **2/6d**, **5/-**, **10/-**, and **£1**.



640 dies



267 dies

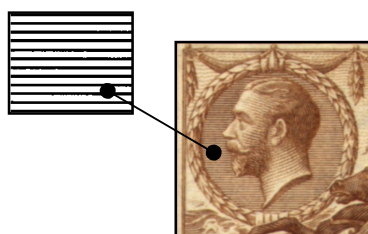


38 dies

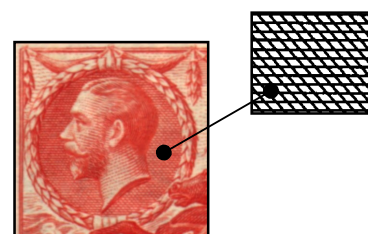


2 dies

The dies were engraved by J A C Harrison. The stamps themselves were printed in sheets of 40, arranged in 10 rows of 4. Four different printers were used during the life of the issue, but no account has been taken of this in the Perfin record. The dies were re-engraved in 1934, and can be easily recognised by the different cross-hatching behind the King's head.



Type 'A'



Type 'B'

Re-engraved Issued date - October 1934 - Type 'B'.



427 dies



239 dies



55 dies

A total of **900** different Perfin dies can be found on the issue, involving **1,656** DDF, **85.7%** of which have identified (or suspected) users.

Perfin figures correct to **1st January 2019**.

The printing sequence for the issue is as follows:

Type 'A'	Introduced	2/6d Brown	5/- Carmine	10/- Blue	£1 Green
Waterlow Bros & Layton	July 1913	P	P	P	P
De la Rue	Dec 1915	P	P	P	---
Bradbury Wilkinson	Dec 1918	P	P	P	---

Type 'B'	Introduced	2/6d Choc-br	5/- Rose-red	10/- Indigo	£1 Green
Waterlow & Sons	Oct 1934	P	P	P	---

Note: The £1 denomination was only printed by Waterlow 1913-1915, after which it '*passed from currency*'. The next appearance of a GB £1 stamp was in May 1929 with the £1 PUC commemorative, followed by the £1 KGVI Wedding stamp issued in April 1948, and the £1 'definitive' issue of October 1948.

The remaining three denominations were replaced as follows:

2/6d (September 1939)

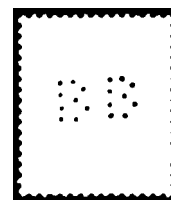
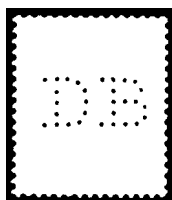
5/- (August 1939)

10/- (November 1942)

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Long regarded as the '*holy grail*' for Perfin collectors is the £1 seahorse with a Perfin. After over 55 years of searching (exactly how long depends on when the hobby first started) the existence of an example was brought to the attention of the Perfin Society at their stand at Midpex in July 2013, with a *Deutsche Bank* "D.B" (D0210.08a) Perfin. Less than 18 months later, in December 2014, a second example appeared on e-Bay, this time with an 'SPG' type Perfin "BB" (B0410.03Av), used by *Bendit Bros*, Merchants, London EC.

Both are illustrated here for reference.



A second edition of the Perfin Society publication '*Great British Perfins found on King George V Seahorses 1913-1939*', compiled by Ian Hamill and Roy Gault, is now available - see the Publications section on the Perfin Society Website.